

PreK - 12 Committee

Addendum A

Meeting

Thursday, September 15, 2005

9:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.

Morris Hall

Allan G. Bense
Speaker

Ralph Arza
Committee Chair

Allan, Katie

From: Cobb, Lynn
Sent: Wednesday, September 14, 2005 4:05 PM
To: Allan, Katie
Cc: Mizereck, Kathy
Subject: FW: Background Checks/Jessica Lunsford Act

Attachments: Tunnell re Lunsford.pdf

From: Bense, Allan
Sent: Wednesday, September 14, 2005 2:47 PM
To: !HSE All House Members & LAs
Cc: Cobb, Lynn; !HSE Speaker's Office
Subject: Background Checks/Jessica Lunsford Act

Members,

In recent weeks a number of you have indicated concerns about the implementation of the Jessica Lunsford Act and the background checks performed on school district contractors and vendors. All of us have heard the concerns voiced by the business community regarding the problem of redundant background screenings and the high costs to contractors who work with multiple school districts.

Attached is a letter signed by me and the Senate President that went to FDLE Commissioner Tunnell directing the agency to establish a database on background check information so districts can verify the vendors/contractors conducting business in multiple districts or who may have been otherwise previously screened. Please understand that this is a temporary solution as we continue to look at other issues related to the Jessica Lunsford Act

FDLE has willingly stepped forward with a solution that will be implemented in the next few days to resolve these concerns. The letter will provide you with the details of this solution. If you have any questions, please contact Lynn Cobb in the House Education Council.

Regards,

Allan Bense



Tunnell re
unsford.pdf (95 KB).

THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE



TOM LEE
President of the Senate



ALLAN BENSE
*Speaker of the House of
Representatives*

September 12, 2005

Commissioner Guy M. Tunnell
Executive Director
Department of Law Enforcement
P.O. Box 1489
Tallahassee, FL 32302-1489

Dear Commissioner Tunnell:

For the past few weeks, legislative staff have been working together with Assistant Commissioner Bustle to address implementation issues relating to the Jessica Lunsford Act. Specifically, one of the more challenging issues we have all been wrestling with relates to the sharing of background screening information by Florida's 67 school districts. In the absence of inter-district agreements to share information, these contractor employees have to be screened separately by each school district. At issue are concerns passed on to us by the business community, specifically, contractors with jobs and employees in multiple school districts that could be required to undergo redundant employee criminal background screenings and associated costs. We feel this problem can be addressed through improved coordination and data sharing.

The Speaker and I are requesting that the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) take the necessary steps to implement FDLE's proposed interim solution to share the results of criminal history background checks with all school districts through a secure web site. We understand these system modifications will allow any of Florida's 67 county school boards to use criminal history record check information provided to another school board on a vendor or contractor. As such, these modifications will eliminate the need for multiple criminal history checks when vendors or contractors do business in more than one school district.

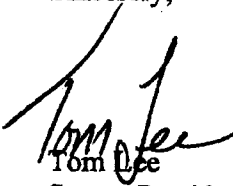
Your management staff have indicated that FDLE can develop this software modification in a week's time and within existing department resources for this 'data sharing' function/purpose. During the 2006 Legislative session, the Legislature will review additional resources and workload requirements for a permanent solution and for any other necessary operational provisions to the Jessica Lunsford Act.

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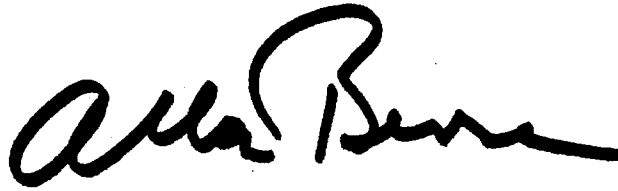
Finally, we would like to extend our appreciation to your staff for their hard work and diligence in working with the Legislature to implement the Jessica Lunsford Act. We appreciate your continued support to develop 'workable' solutions to our implementation challenges while ensuring we keep our focus on protecting Florida's children.

Sincerely,



Tom Lee
Senate President

/sm



Allan Bense
House Speaker